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INCAN COMMUNISM AND BOLSHEVISM

THE social problem is the most important one that engages the attention of the world to-day. Serious thinkers hold that if democracy cannot achieve the solution of the problem of economic inequalities the death-knell of democracy will be sounded. We observe the signs of a world-wide movement in the direction of a new economic organization of mankind. Most sociologists and statesmen believe in a slow adjustment and progressive reform, and they oppose the sudden changes proclaimed by radicalism.

Russia furnishes the only recent case in which such radical measures have been introduced. The bolshevists have attempted to establish a utopia of communism, and this adventure, so fraught with danger for Russia, has afforded us a most instructive experiment in what communism truly is. Many sociologists are devoting themselves passionately to the study of the facts in Russia, with the belief that sovietism is the only important instance of practical or genuine communism. History teaches us, however, that there existed, four centuries ago, an example of practical communism in South America, within the setting of a great empire. In the light of this fact, we may apply a judgment based on reality to this other experiment in communism, which, if it does not possess the value of modernity and opportuneness, has another interesting feature, because, contrary to bolshevism, it was successful and it lasted for many centuries.

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I therefore present to you, as the subject of this lecture, a comparison between these two cases of communism, unique in history: that of the Inca and that of the soviet, that of ancient Peru and that of modern Russia, that which built up an empire and a civilization and that which is now seeking to destroy a society and a culture.

In order to understand the facts of a social organization, the best method is to observe its positive and its negative aspects. We need to compare the results of the efforts of the soviets with the results of the system of the Incas; we must also compare the methods employed by the bolshevists to establish their system with the methods employed by the Incas in ancient Peru.

The first consideration is that of the reality of communism in the empire of the Incas. Even the most skeptical historians are bound to agree as to the truly communistic nature of the Peruvian federation. It is impossible to doubt the paternal and social character of the Peruvian monarchy, in the face of the unanimous testimony of all the historians, conquerors, and travelers. Speaking briefly, this testimony may be classified as that of the chroniclers or historians who eulogized the civilization of the Incas, such as Garcilaso and Valera, and that of those who intentionally condemned the tyranny of the Incas, like Sarmiento and Balboa—but they all agree as to the chief factor—that the Peruvian state held control of the land and of labor, which constitutes the essence of the communistic system. In the second place, there were the soldiers or conquerors, who wrote accounts of their exploits. Although the opinion of the conquerors is not so important as that of the historians, we may not deny or reject the events they described. The testimony of a third group is much more valuable, since it consists of reports made by

jurists in compliance with the instructions of the king of Spain, who sought to obtain the most accurate descriptions of the government of the Incas. These jurists were Juan Matienzo, Polo de Ondegardo, and Fernando de Santillán; and they all agree as to the main features of the Incan communism.

Summarizing all these testimonies, we may affirm that in the regions traversed by the Andes, from Pasto, in the southern part of Colombia, to Maule, in the south of Chile, an extent of two thousand miles, the Incas had established a great empire, military, religious, and paternal, at one and the same time. The people obeyed and worshiped the Incas as children of the sun. All the *vassals* possessed the same rank, with the exception of a very limited nobility and a strong hierarchy of functionaries. The land belonged to the state, and individual effort was actuated by a social aim. None were rich and none were poor. Religion and the state were supported by the income from the crown lands and from the labor of the subjects. The head of every family was entitled to a certain portion of land, which was assigned to him year by year. The social organism rested on a religious foundation. The people worshiped the sun as their god; and politics and religion were mingled in one.

The system was not only based on military compulsion, but also on the belief and will of the people, because they were held to guarantee the general welfare. The people deemed the rulership of the Incas a blessing of their god.

It is true that this system was a negation of personal liberty, yet none may deny either that it assured individuals of their material support or that it contributed to the progress of society. The eminent Polo de Ondegardo said: "Therefore there was never any hunger in this kingdom";

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and Santillán: "There was much in their rule that was so good as to deserve praise and to be even worthy of imitation." More eloquent than the opinion of the historians, however, were the material evidences of the people's well-being. These evidences consisted in the increase in the population—the Spaniards found more than eight million inhabitants in Peru—and the extent of cultivation on the mountain slopes, in the form of terraces, many of which are now neglected.

I think I have established the fact and the successfulness of the system of the Incas, and I now turn to the consideration of the main features of the system in order to set forth as correct an idea as possible.

A principal factor in every socialistic system is what relates to property in land. In the monarchy of the Incas, the cultivated land of every valley of an organized province was divided into three shares. One was the property of the sun; another, of the Inca or government; and the other, of the community. Hence the state owned two-thirds of the land; and the communities or *aillos*, the remaining third.

The products yielded by the lands of the sun and the Inca were applied to religious and state uses, as well as to the relief of the population of the communities in times of want or famine, under exceptional circumstances. The lands owned by the communities were distributed every year in lots assigned to heads of families. The products of each lot became the private property of the family.

Domestic cattle and the land they occupied were the property of the state, one share being assigned to the Incas; another, to the sun, for the use of the priesthood; and the other to the communities; but wild cattle were the property of the state alone.

A second leading factor of socialistic organization is the compulsory character of labor. We should attend to this feature of the Incan government. All the vassals were compelled to work between the ages of eighteen and fifty. The chief labors were as follows:

1. The tilling of the land that belonged to the sun and to the Incas.

2. The care of the cattle.

3. The construction of roads and forts. Each province had to take care of the parts of the roads that traversed it.

4. Service in the army.

5. Personal service rendered to the Incas. The vassals that engaged in it were called *yanacunas*.

6. The work of the *chasquis*, who were in charge of the postal service, which was quite wonderful for celerity and efficiency.

7. The occupation of the weavers of fabrics. Each province had to supply a certain quantity of cloth woven from the wool of the cattle that belonged to the sun and to the Incas.

Besides these general labors, each province, according to the products of its soil and the ability of its inhabitants, was forced to pay a tax in some manufactured or raw product. Hence there were provinces of goldsmiths, silver-smiths, et cetera.

Summing up these facts, it is proper to say that, instead of a money tax, the subjects of the Incan monarchy paid tribute by personal labor in the public service. There always remained to them sufficient time for their personal requirements, and in case the state required all their time, they were then supported by the government.

A third important factor of the communistic system is the organization of the family. In this respect, the rule of the

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Incas falls within this system. Marriage was not a private affair, but an affair of the state, as the state had fixed the age for a compulsory marriage, which took place without regard to individual choice.

The offspring of such marriages was also subject to the state. Many of the girls were consecrated to the worship of the sun, and many others served as concubines or wives of the nobles and chiefs.

The fourth important feature of communistic system is the rigid administrative hierarchy. We find also this feature present in the Incan communism. The bulk of the population was divided into groups of a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand and forty thousand units. In this decimal hierarchy each group had its chief. Over the groups of ten thousand were the *curacas*, and over the *curacas* were overseers appointed by the Incas, called *tucuiricos*. The country was divided in four sections, each of them being under a supreme chief. This abundance of functionaries made the administration vigilant and efficient.

In the light of this survey of the situation, the problem is to explain how the Incas effected so perfect an organization over a territory so extensive and broken and with such imperfect instruments for culture. Many historians and sociologists look upon the Peruvian state as a wonderful achievement, a veritable miracle. Until recent years, criticism in respect of Peruvian history was not well developed, and scholars concluded that this remarkable machinery was created or built up by the Incas amid a savage population.

The achievement of the Incas was set forth as a providential mission, since they not only set up a government, but also a culture; and they changed primitive men into the mild and intelligent citizens of a great state. The legend

of Manco-Cápac, the founder of the empire, as the supreme hero, warrior and legislator, was accepted everywhere.

Many sociologists have investigated these original instances of advanced socialism. Spencer explained the rigid form of the Peruvian communism as the result of the military designs of the empire, in harmony with his theory regarding military and industrial societies; but Spencer's explanation does not cover the case, inasmuch as many other military empires did not possess a communistic organization. Incan communism remained as one of the miracles of history until the sociologists, Cunow and De-greef, and the Peruvianist, Markham, observed that Incan communism was based on the village communities that existed everywhere. Professor Cunow attempted to explain Incan communism, not as a system created from above downward by the Incas, but as the result of the association or confederation of the village communities, called *marcas* or *aillos*, and very similar to the gypsy clans and to the village communities of the Indians. Exaggerating this view, the equality of the components that formed ancient Peru was affirmed, and the originality of the achievements of the Incas was minimized by describing their empire as not a true nation, but a simple aggregation of small primitive societies. This exaggeration will be corrected when we observe that the empire of the Incas comprised at least five different ethnological groups, which had to accept, and to accommodate themselves to, diverse customs and institutions. We must note also that the military enterprises, the extension of roads, the construction of forts and temples, the system of irrigation and the imposition of the same religion and the same language are evidence that the society of the Incas was more than a mere accumulation of *aillos*, and that it possessed the strength of national personality.

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We no longer believe in the miracle of Manco-Cápac and the creation of a system by the Incas; nor do we hold that the empire of the Incas was merely the result of the superimposition of the village communities. The work of the Incas was the assimilation and adaptation of the village community system to the needs of a great empire, and in this respect their work was original and worthy of praise.

For our comparison with sovietism, the minute study of the methods employed by the Incas to bring the tribes under the dominion of the government is of the greatest importance. Long before the time of the Incas, not only the tribes that lived in the neighborhood of Cuzco and on the lofty table-lands about Lake Titicaca, but also the tribes which occupied the valleys of the coast, practised the system of village communism. Probably the remains of a civilization whose centre was at Tiahuanaco were preserved by the tribes under the Incas and their kinsmen the Quechuas.

The tribes under the Incas, which were four, according to the legend, were endowed with military gifts and political ability. They settled in the valley of Cuzco, and they began to draw to them, in peaceful confederation, the neighboring tribes. In some cases, they subjected them by war. When they succeeded in forming a nucleus of some importance, rivalry sprang up between the confederation of the Incas and another formed by the Chancas. The victory of the Incas over the Chancas marked the beginning of the empire. The rich valleys about Cuzco were under the control of the Incas, and they became a centre for the spread of their influence toward the north and toward the south. Conquest followed conquest in rapid succession, inasmuch as there was no general opposition, the Incas encountering only isolated groups. Serious resistance was

offered them nowhere save in the valleys of the northern coast, occupied by the Chimus, and, about Lake Titicaca, by certain tribes in rebellion. The policy followed by the Incas for the assimilation of these different elements was, first of all, not to suppress the religion, the government, or the language of the several tribes, but to place above them their own language, government, and religion.

All the tribal idols were collected at Cuzco to form a sort of pantheon, and the worship of the sun was set above that of the tutelary divinities. In addition to the different dialects, Rumacini, the language of the empire, was imposed far and wide, and this was a great instrument for the production of unity. Also, the government respected the authority of the *curacas*, the heads of the *aillos* or communities, while placing over them or beside them functionaries of the central government. The authority of the *curacas* was hereditary, but the Incas reserved the right to choose from among the several sons the one best suited to govern. To strengthen the empire and to prevent rebellion in certain regions, they moved the population from one place to another in the form of military colonies. More effective than all these means, however, was the continuance of the system of communal property under which the conquered tribes had lived. After the conquest of a province or valley, the Incas, instead of taking all the land from the conquered, in order, perhaps, to give it to the head of the ruling tribes, took only a certain part of the land for the purpose of applying the products obtained from it to religion and to the central government, while leaving the remaining part for the tribes or *aillos* of the conquered valley or province. The part that remained for the former owners must be sufficient for their support, and in many cases, the Incas resorted to irrigation in order to increase the

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arable land. The same policy was followed in regard to cattle. Speaking briefly, conquest by the Incas, from the point of view of social structure, did not mean a radical change, with the loss of property by the vanquished, for the benefit of the state of the conquerors or of the ruling tribes, and the conversion of the bulk of the population into serfs. Quite on the contrary, the conquered people kept the greater part of their land, and they acquired the title of vassals of the Incas, while retaining their former authorities. The loss of a part of their land was offset by the advantage of belonging to a great empire and by the fact that in many cases the products of the land were applied to their needs. The economic requirements of the empire were supplied by the products of the land assigned to the Inca and to the sun and by the labor of the population. The policy of the Incas was wise and effective. It consisted in respecting the economic structure of the tribes and in harmonizing the interests of the diverse groups of the empire with those of the ruling class. The system of the Incas was not destructive, but constructive; their policy was not radical, but evolutionary.

It is not difficult to point out the grounds of success of the Incan communism. The first of them was the agricultural character of the country. Communism is more difficult—in truth, it is quite impossible—in industrial countries, which demand that particular regard shall be had for private interests and personal skill. The second of them was the more important, perhaps: the preëxistence of the system of village communities. It was communism applied in the different localities of the country.

In addition to these material grounds, we must consider the spiritual ones, which are perhaps more difficult to secure among modern peoples. The first of these grounds was the

collective economic psychology of the Indians. In respect of Peruvian sociology, it is worthy of remark that the Indians or aboriginal races were not characterized by individual activities, although very capable in respect of social and collective labor. The second of the spiritual grounds was the absence of the sentiment of personal liberty among the Indians.

The sentiment of personal liberty would not exist at the stage of civilization attained by them. For this reason they submitted willingly to the rule of the *caciques* or chiefs, and afterward to that of the officials of the Incas.

The third spiritual ground was religious sentiment. Political obedience is absolutely certain and effective when it is backed by the religious prestige and authority of the master or of the ruling class. This was precisely the case of the Incas.

The preceding analysis goes to prove that communism can be the type of a primitive society only and the result of exceptional circumstances. The industrial organization of society has progressed with the passing of the years, thus producing a very complicated structure. At the same time, along with progress has come the development of individual activity and the sentiment of personal freedom, while robbing the political institutions and organs of their formidable power of religious prestige.

With none of the bases of Incan communism, as they have been presented, and with no other means for the present control of the state and for the establishment of the absolute power of the government, the soviet has attempted to set up a communism in Russia, and the results have been consonant with the general lack of favorable circumstances.

In contrast with the success of Incan communism, the

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soviet system has brought Russia to the verge of ruin and death.

Polo de Ondegardo reminds us that "there was never hunger in Peru," and the British labor delegation to Russia tells us that in Russia "there are evident signs of illness and underfeeding to be seen in most of the crowds that one encounters."

We know that in ancient Peru the cultivation of the soil was so much improved by irrigation that it extended in some cases to the summits of the hills. Attorney Santillán shows that before the conquest cattle were as "abundant as grass." Contrast with this the statement of Mr. Sereda, the commissioner of agriculture, quoted by the British delegation. From it we learn that, in respect of the land, "The decrease in productivity is estimated at from thirty to forty per cent."

Let us recall the wonderful increase in population in ancient Peru, and then let us note the tremendous decrease in the population of Russia. Petrograd formerly had two million inhabitants; it now has only six hundred thousand.

In spite of the lack of a true industrial organization, ancient Peru was generally supplied with great quantities of clothing. The conquerors found much clothing stored in the warehouses of the outlying regions. Even twenty years after the conquest, in the time of President Gasca, the Indians continued to send woven fabrics to the storehouses throughout the country. In contrast with this, the British delegation reports that: "Several methods have been tried to stimulate production (in industry), which has declined to the point of disaster, owing, first, to the want of skilled workmen and people of technical training; second, to faulty labor discipline among the workmen; and, third, to the abolishment of piece work."

Apart from these material factors of public welfare, however, and considering only the state of mind, peace and general satisfaction, we must recall the happiness of the subjects of the Incan empire; the ready acceptance of the rule of the Incas by the vanquished tribes; and the harmony and tranquillity that existed throughout the vast empire. Then let us compare those ancient conditions with the perpetual turmoil, the general unrest and the bloody reign of terror produced by the soviet system in Russia. The starving population of the cities and towns is made subservient to government by force, and the peasantry only passively accept the new régime.

Let us consider in detail the methods of sovietism, as compared with those of the Incas. The land question demands first consideration. Russia is, in the main, an agricultural country. Of her population of one hundred and twenty-five million, at least ninety million are peasants. The land belonged to the nobles, the church, and, here and there, the peasants.

In spite of the agricultural character of Russia and the agricultural character of ancient Peru, it is impossible to find any great resemblance between the two countries. Such similarity as there is lies in two main directions: first, the agricultural character of the population; and, second, the system of village communities, based on the collective ownership of the land. More than three-fourths of the Russian peasants live under the system of village communities; and there is a great similarity between the Russian *mir* and the Incan *aillo*.

Nevertheless, a thorough analysis will reveal very important differences between Russia and Peru, even in the system of the ownership of land. In ancient Peru, the whole population dwelt in the country and lived by the

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products of the land. In Russia, the major part of the land was the property of the landowners and of the church; and a considerable part was owned by the holders of small properties. Hence, in Russia, on the eve of the revolution, there existed a marked tendency toward the individual ownership of land, and the desire of the peasant was to spread the system of small holdings by taking possession of the large estates. Russia therefore lacked the chief ground of the success of Incan communism, which is the community system in respect of the land.

The other difference between the agricultural system of Russia and the agricultural character of Peru is not less important. In Russia, agricultural life is not independently and exclusively agricultural. On the contrary, it is connected more closely every day with the industrial system; first, in response to the general tendency of modern civilization; second, because progress in agriculture demands implements, machinery and credits, all of which are connected with the industrial and commercial life; and third, because of the increase in population (the surplus population of the country must be supported by industrial labor); and, fourth, because agriculture in Russia was deeply in need of a good system of transportation. What a contrast with the Incan social organization!

Ancient Peru, as a primitive nation, did not need an industrial organization to support and improve the agricultural system. Bearing in mind these striking differences, it is possible to explain the failure of sovietism.

Roughly speaking, it may be said that the Peruvian tribes, on the eve of the conquest by the Incas, were prepared to systematize the village community in such a manner as to form a great empire, that should be set up among the different valleys or provinces. On the eve of the revo-

lution, Russia desired to solve the agricultural problem by merely turning over the land to the peasants—thus rendering general the system of small land holdings—while establishing at the same time a good system of transportation and improving the industries connected with agriculture.

The soviet programme, however, offered an exactly contrary solution to this problem. The nationalization of land was contrary to the system of small holdings that had been supported by the peasants; and the socialization of the factories and means of transportation has brought on disaster.

All the writers are now agreed that the land problem has been settled in Russia contrary to the programme of bolshevism. Morris Hindus says: "So that at present the agricultural system in vogue in Russia is that of small landholders, which is entirely out of harmony with the fundamental aim of the bolsheviki to abolish all forms of private property and to kill even the desire for its existence"; and he adds: "Decree or no decree, the land was destined to pass into the hands of the peasant. The peasant was seizing it by force of arms. The bolsheviki merely legalized, modified, and strove to direct a process that had already set in on a large scale." The opportunist policy of the bolshevists toward the land in respect of small holdings has to face this problem: "How to get the products needed for the subsistence of the towns out of the hands of the peasants?"

The Incas drew the product needed by the nobles, the clergy, the army, and certain workers from the land that belonged to the state.

The bolshevists had to buy the products from the peasants. Since it was impossible to pay for them in goods, on account of the blockade and the collapse of manufactures, they gave the peasants worthless paper rubles. The

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peasants, however, were not easily deceived, and they hid the products in order to obtain higher prices through illegal sales.

The soviets therefore are compelled to wrest the products from the peasants by force; but the peasants are ready to resist. Fighting then, and massacre by the red guards, are the results.

Synthesizing the foregoing facts, we may say that the bolshevist solution of the agricultural problem has been insincere and inconsistent in theory, and brutal and ineffective in practice.

Not only because of the importance of the industrial problem in itself, but also because of its connection with the agricultural problem, the bolshevists ought to make a great effort to reestablish the industrial life.

The individualistic system being overthrown, the only way to secure products is to set up a system of compulsory labor. It is curious to observe that they have established for this compulsory labor the same rule as that of the Incas, in respect of age, which is from eighteen until fifty. This compulsory labor, possible in a primitive society, as in the simple undertaking of the construction of roads, is quite impossible, however, in the complicated industrial life of the present day, in which personal interest and individual training are the chief factors. The bolshevists, aware of these difficulties, have moderated their programme by placing the leading minds in industry, and skilled workmen in exceptional positions.

The British delegation said: "Specialists and technicians receive very much higher rates of pay." The bolshevists were also obliged, in the interest of a firmer discipline and organization, to appoint commissioners of industry, who seem to hold a position of privilege, more important,

perhaps, than that enjoyed by the leading minds in the individualistic system. Because of all these incongruities and failures, the bolshevists have not succeeded in placing the industries in a good position.

We do not need to be reminded that the industrial population of Russia lacks the psychic factors of communism, which depend upon the collective soul, the absence of personal freedom and scrupulous, not to say, religious, obedience to the leader—the basis of the success of the Incan system.

In practice, the bolshevist system has created a bureaucratic organization of the industries and a very strong hierarchy; and the result is by no means satisfactory. We have only to recall that the state of the manufacturing and transportation industries is regarded as a "disaster," according to the qualification of the British delegation.

Summarizing the results of the system, we may say that it offers no solution of the land problem, which has been settled by the peasants themselves; and the application of the system to the industries has led to paralyzation and chaos.

It is impossible to make a comparison between the Incan system of families and that of Russia, because we cannot obtain reliable information regarding the latter. We can only say that, according to each system, children are under the control of the state. Regarding the bureaucratic system, which was so rigid in Incan communism, we may observe that it is not less rigid under the soviet system. Absolution was the chief characteristic of the Incan empire, and absolution is also the characteristic of the Russian communistic government. Bertrand Russell has described the system of the soviet for us in his remarkable study of bolshevism: "Sovereignty nominally belonged to the

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assembly, but practically it is exercised by the 'presidium,' which consists of nine men who meet daily and have all the power."

The bolshevists accept these facts, frankly declaring that the working of the system demands a dictatorship.

According to Wells, we must not attribute the collapse of Russia to the sole cause of the bolshevist system. This last phase of Russian history is the result of the mistakes and crimes committed by the régime of the czars, of the six years of war and blockade and of the evils that are common to a capitalistic system. If the crisis of Russia was prepared in advance, there is no doubt that the bolshevist system enormously aggravated it.

On the eve of the revolution, Russia possessed factories and the means of transportation. A government that would have accepted the solution of the land problem offered by the peasants themselves, that would have kept the factories and the transportation system in proper operation and that would have maintained commercial relations with foreign countries would have saved Russia.

The lesson we draw from this comparison is that among no modern people, even the least advanced, can we find either the material or the spiritual conditions which, as exceptional circumstances, made possible the wonderful success of the Incan communism.